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GILT AND GLISTER FROM THE GOLDEN AGE...

Souvenirs of Opera: *Le Billet de Loterie*—Non, je ne veux pas chanter (Isouard); Frieda Hempel (soprano). *Polyeucte*—Source délicieuse en misère féconde (Gounod); Léon Escalais (tenor). *Messaline*—Elle m'avait pris (de Lara); Antonio Scotti (baritone). *Rogneda*—The Viking Ballad (Seroff); Anna Davydovna Meitschik (contralto). *Lorenza*—Io son bella (Mascheroni); *Tosca*—Quanto? il prezzo (Puccini); Emma Carelli (soprano); Mario Sammarco (baritone). *Aida*—Final Scene (Verdi); Marie Rappold (soprano); Giovanni Zenatello (tenor). *Werther*—Va, laisse couler mes larmes (Massenet); Medea Mei-Figner (soprano). International Record Collectors' Club, 318 Reservoir Ave., Bridgeport 6, Conn. L-7011, ten-inch, \$4 plus postage; 50 cents; 75 cents west of the Mississippi.

▲THIS program is a bargain counter or a sampler, as you prefer, with one fabulous name and voice after another, singing, for the most part, refreshingly unfamiliar music. Otherwise there is not much of a thread of continuity. The accompanying notes state that well qualified judges consider the Hempel recording her most brilliant, and surely the claim is not without foundation. The voice is in its absolute prime, the coloratura marvelously clean and even. The aria, one of those slight but charming affairs in which the lighter French

operas abound, does not suffer too much from translation into German, and it is tossed off with delightful ease.



Escalais: "broad and handsome tone"

The cadenza was written for Hempel by Saint-Saëns. Escalais, always a singer with plenty of power, offers

another novelty in a broad and handsome tone. The Scotti would seem to be his first G & T recording, dating from 1902 (dates are unfortunately missing from our documentation) and a fine smooth piece of singing it is. Strange that his first disc should be sung in French! Anna Meitschik's organ tones roll out splendidly in her unknown aria, with plenty of vitality and spirit. Her recordings are extremely rare; this one alone would justify the price of this disc. Carelli and Sammarco give us two scenes, the first belonging chiefly to her, the second to him. Carelli, noted as a superior actress, was beyond doubt a temperamental singer who could load her rather thinnish voice with plenty of drama. Sammarco matches her with his evil laughter in the *Tosca* scene. The Rappold-Zenatello duet shows the soprano's creamy but never very exciting voice to fine advantage, while the tenor is at his characteristic best. Kaschmann's offering was dubbed onto 78 rpm years ago by IRCC, but with nothing like the effect it has now. Here is style and a fine clear voice. Finally, the legendary Mme. Mei-Figner gives a splendid account, in Russian, of the *Werther* aria. Hers was a voice with human quality. Though Russian by marriage only (she was born and trained in Italy) the language seems to have pretty thoroughly naturalized her. —P.L.M.

... AND ITS CONTROVERSIAL CARMEN

BIZET: "Carmen"—*Habanera*; *Séguidille*; *Chanson Bohème*; *Halte-là! Qui va là?*; *Au quartier pour l'appel*; *Air de la Fleur*; *Là bas dans la montagne*; *Voyons que j'essaie*; *Je dis que rien m'épouvante*; *Si tu m'aimes*; *C'est toi!*; *Je t'aime encore*; Geraldine Farrar (soprano); Giovanni Martinelli (tenor); Pasquale Amato (baritone); Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra. Camden CAL-359, \$1.98.

▲FARRAR first essayed the role of Carmen at the Metropolitan on 19 November, 1914, in a cast including Caruso, Alda and Amato, with Toscanini conducting. Most of these recordings were made at that time. Her interpretation of the many-faceted role was always a somewhat controversial one. Hers was not, certainly, the generally accepted "Carmen" voice—though the same may be said of Lilli Lehman, Ernestine Schumann-Heink, and above all Adelina Patti, all of whom appeared in the opera. These records show, it seems to me, that this negative description worked both ways. One ex-

pects, and listens for, a deeper tone quality. Farrar's voice was by nature a pure and lovely lyric soprano. When she put pressure on it, as she sometimes did in this music, it was apt to lose its quality and become white. For all that, there are plenty of fine moments in these selections, and evidence throughout of a real intelligence at work. Sometimes, indeed, the characterization seems overdone, as in the *Séguidille*. Rather amusingly, the 1908 Micaela aria is included in this performance. The effect is strangely credible, for at the time this record was made Farrar must have been a natural in the ingénue part. Of her two partners, Martinelli is in especially fine voice throughout. One only wishes he had made his entrance from the distance in the *Halte-là!* scene. Both singers rise well to the drama of the final scene. Amato, who has only a short passage to sing before entering the ring in the last act, is not in top form. The quality of the refurbished recording is generally good for what it is, though there is a strong contrast occasionally as one sec-

tion ends and another begins. And the echo chamber has produced some genuine echo. —P.L.M.

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A Minority Report on

Rolf Liebermann

By PEGGY GLANVILLE-HICKS

THE APPEARANCE on LP of Rolf Liebermann's opera, "School for Wives", affords a welcome opportunity to reopen the case for this distinguished man of the theater from Switzerland who, on the occasion of his first visit to the United States in 1956 for the première of his Louisville-commissioned work, was accorded in New York an especially chill critical reception—a misfortune only partly compensated for by the rave reviews elsewhere.

On the subject of this score—indeed, on the subject of the music of Liebermann in general—I find myself in total disagreement with the New York criticism, and it is a difference of opinion upon which, out of respect for quality and craftsmanship, I feel impelled to air my views. Not in defense of Liebermann need I write, for his name and achievements throughout Europe place him above the need for championing, but rather in amendment of our own judgment here at home.

In the evaluation of opera it is important to note that there are on the modern scene many different kinds, and one must correctly perceive the aim and category before trying to judge a composer's degree of success or failure. What genre has he chosen; what are his musical, dramatic, prosodic, literary tastes and talents; and to how successful a fusion does he bring these in his chosen frame of reference?

Liebermann is widely regarded abroad as the leading opera composer of today, and his "Penelope", introduced at Salzburg in 1954, is to many minds, my own included, the greatest composition in the main line of operatic tradition that has yet emerged from the musical cataclysm known as modernism.

I say "main line" advisedly, for works

such as Alban Berg's "Wozzeck" or the sensational theater pieces of Carl Orff cannot be ignored as massive milestones to the right or left of this line. But the former by his complexity, the latter by his particular brand of simplification, step aside from the arena of general repertory, important poets of catharsis though they be in musico-theatrical history.

Liebermann's line is dead center; armed with the whole gamut of music's most advanced materials he entered the ring before the largest, most general, and least erudite music public in the world, that of opera, and so compelling has his achievement been in this form that this public has accepted without cavil the advanced nature of his methods and materials, as is witnessed by the fact that "Penelope" has passed into the repertory of half a dozen of the German opera houses in the two years since its première.

Essentially, Liebermann is a man of the theater, and even in his purely symphonic works his dramatic viewpoint is everywhere apparent. He dramatizes his musical materials as a playwright will dramatize and stylize his individual characters. By this I do not mean anything so simple as the use of highly contrasted *leitmotives* as parallels to dramatic realism, or even a use of forceful contrasts within a personal style; Liebermann uses styles themselves as the dramatic partisans, pitting a whole esthetic or specific technique against a differing one. This kind of type-casting of genre against genre within a unified whole is something new, as he does it, and quite a miracle of structural craftsmanship, highly pungent in its evocative and expressive power.

Always there is a "point" to his pieces, a point of departure clearly established, and an apotheosis excitingly achieved; a drama posed and solved by posing the "argument" in the very organic nature of the chosen materials themselves, and creating a resolution within this nature.

When Liebermann designs a tonal section within an atonal score, or vice versa, it indicates not uncertainty of métier but its very opposite, mastery of a new vantage point from which is possible a new



"Essentially . . . a man of the theater"

kind of freedom of movement among the available resources of present-day Europe, which is this composer's own position in time and place.

The main musical challenge of our era is the problem of form; and in the search for the new forms that belong with our new modern materials, America's drift has been unmistakably toward a tonal gravity (though a modal rather than diatonic one), while Europe's has continued in an atonal direction, following to some European conclusion the direction set by its own evolutionists: Schönberg, Berg and Webern.

Now, the serious disadvantages of this trend have seemed to us to be a lack of contrast in mood, rhythm, and tension—for the devices of a dissonant continuum and ever-fragmented rhythm fabric too often result in a convention that grows more tedious than the one they were invented to disrupt.

Liebermann's contribution seems to take us a positive step forward in the search for a new architecture. His materials we know and recognize; it is his *viewpoint* that is different, strong, and fresh. He is like a man who has climbed a mountain to a new peak and sees in one valley atonalism, in another neoclassicism and its cousins, and stretched out before him across the plain the whole of musical history, all these a rich heritage to be chosen from freely as musical mood, structural demand, or dramatic need dictate.

There have been other attempts, varying in their degree of success, to combine the major schools of thought of our century, but none so dynamic as Liebermann's. The experiments have been largely those of purely intellectual or merely inventive composers, and it is never the hair-splitting of such figures that advance music's history, though they function valuably as consolidators. It is rather the product of intuition that opens new chapters, discovers new forms. Lieber-

Our guest contributor this month is herself a composer of operas (a recording of "The Transposed Heads" was reviewed in the August, 1955 issue). A prolific critic, she has written for both scholarly and popular journals, and for years her hyphenated initials were to be seen almost daily in The New York Herald Tribune.

THE STORY.

"School for Wives" is about one Arnolphe, a wealthy and vain old man who has an unshakable contempt for all women. He delights in exposing the infidelities of his friends' wives, and while he is as drawn to the opposite sex as any of them, he is determined to find a wife who will shower all her affection on him, and him alone. When he finds Agnes, a simple country girl, he therefore rears her quietly in a convent, where she remains protected from the ways of the world. When Arnolphe considers her ripe for marriage, he brings her to his home. Of course, she immediately meets and falls in love with Horace, as young and handsome as Arnolphe is old and avaricious. Horace, not realizing that the old man who keeps Agnes under lock and key is Arnolphe, confides his love to Arnolphe

and asks for Arnolphe's assistance in winning Agnes. This confidence sets off a series of schemes and counter-schemes, honored ingredients of classical comic opera. Agnes is determined to escape her fate and flee with Horace. Arnolphe is equally determined to keep her for himself. This situation is resolved by Agnes' father who, after many years of travel in the United States, has come back to fulfill the old promise to give Agnes in marriage to the son of an old friend. The old friend turns out to be the father of Horace. Agnes and Horace are delighted, and the entire cast reminds Arnolphe of a saying by Beaumarchais, to wit: "*Vous-les donner de l'esprit d'une sotte, enfermez-la*". (If you want to make a foolish woman resourceful, lock her up.)

mann's method in his own hands is a wholly creative process (in the hands of lesser writers it might be fraught with the danger of pastiche), and it is a tribute to his creative magnitude that he moves into such territory, taking for granted the power in himself to impose his own individual unity upon historically and esthetically disparate elements.

It is perhaps a "collective" expression of this same intuitive progression that prompts the composers of this second half of the twentieth century to turn to the operatic form. The turn may be partly due to a nostalgia for lyrical and romantic expression denied by the current stridency in abstract genres; more deeply, I think, it is part of the unending search for form. The harmonic revolution of Europe's *fin de siècle* exploded the arches of the diatonic system around which had grown the whole musical architecture of the western world. Rhythm, America's graduation offering, poured a yeast into this pile of rubble, producing a heady cacophony that could return to the order of the former arch only in a "neo" capacity with a kind of chromium-plated baroque edifice. Consciousness of this uneasy compromise also may be pointing the trend toward opera, where many factors other than purely musical ones can validly dictate form. Composers do not need a Frank Lloyd Wright to tell them that organic form must proceed from the nature of their materials; they know this, but they also know that in times of great artistic mutation these forms must be allowed time to emerge as the result of collective intuition, not by intellectual precept.

The "cantilever" of our new architecture that will logically replace the "arch" for abstract forms is to be found somewhere in the mastery of tensions. Liebermann has perceived with brilliant clarity the fact that the control point for tension in music lies in two factors: in the contrast between high and low degrees of dissonance (or the gamut from total dissonance to total consonance), and in the tightening and relaxing of rhythmic meter. Mastery of these two factors, singly and

combined, gives him a superb freedom to move dramatically over a wide expressive span where other composers remain inhibited by the restriction of a personalized or "patented" idiom, often one couched in terms of a seemingly obligatory perpetual dissonance. To deprive oneself of consonant sounds is to delete half of the expressive range, and the polarity point for dissonance. To omit dissonance, similarly, is to deprive oneself of the heightened degrees of expression that the twentieth century has bequeathed to the musical language. Liebermann, perhaps more than anyone writing in Europe, has understood all this, and his works consolidate the new vision.

Liebermann's approach to story material is another significant phase of his work, and is well worth studying.

Just as America's musical drift is tonal, and Europe's atonal, so do our theater tastes flow diversely; America leans heavily toward realism, with its single direction and its inevitable extremity, the shock tactic. Menotti's latter-day "Saint of Bleeker Street" points this extreme, and so hectic is its immediate effect that the lack of intrinsic distinction in the music passes almost unnoticed in the first impression. One cannot, however, go back to hear it again and again, as one does when an opera "exists" in its score.

Europe's approach to theater is largely objective, with stylization opening the door—as only it can—to a potent gamut of forms, from comedy to tragedy, for stylization can apply on many levels, from the mere terms of presentation to stylization of the dramatic substance itself, and the idea level. This last is of the timeless essence of true theater.

In each of the three Liebermann operas, stylization figures in a different way. The first, "Leonore", concerns a French girl in love with a German boy in wartime, a touching subject and a daring one to have treated as early as 1952, when the work was first produced in Basel.

The stylistics of French and German vocal tradition are beautifully opposed, while musical references ranging from Liszt's *Liebestraum*, dodecaphony, and a

radio performance of Mozart to glimpses of a jazz band sweep in turn across score and stage with surprise effect, just the familiar but unexpectedly grouped objects in a Dali painting.

The essence of Liebermann's later dramatic technique is, in this work, seen with almost laboratory clarity. It is, indeed, a kind of musical application of the technique of surrealism, where identifiable thought symbols are dissociated from their familiar context and placed for dramatic effect in new juxtapositions. It is a special means, with a special end. On our local scene we have in the Virgil Thomson operas an example of somewhat similar method; but just as Dada was in painting a stillborn twin of the more vital surrealism, so Thomson's works demonstrate, as did Dada in painting, merely the technique of dissociation, without



Liebermann and Librettist Strobel

posing a new meaning. It is a parade of means, without an end, save perhaps that of perverse humor.

Another feature of "Leonore" is the Interlude, or symphonic development of the operatic subject matter; symphony was born of opera and, in these paraphrases, brings back to the mother form subtleties gained in its own span of independence. Liebermann has written some of his loveliest musical moments in these brief asides, though it is a device he appears to have abandoned thereafter.

Liebermann's second opera, "Penelope" (like "Leonore" it has a libretto by Heinrich Strobel), places the stylization on the story level and the dramatic situation rather than in the music; here, too, styles are used to evoke shifts in epoch, but a closer overall fusion in style prevails than in "Leonore". The plot is dynamically presented in visible situations, needing no wordy explanation, but only the working out of tense dilemmas in purely musical terms. The composer reached in this work his highest creative point so far—and in perhaps his most abstract and austere musical manner. The vocal role of Penelope bears testimony to his great response to a great situation, for he scales height and plumbs depth in his own ex-

pressive range, from an extraordinary tension and strength to a rare and intimate tenderness.

Liebermann's passion for stylization and the objective approach led him for his third opera to Molière, monumental stylist in comedy satire. The gentle buffo "School for Wives"—presented at the New York City Center in 1956 and now available in recorded form—was the result. Here stylization is pre-set in Molière's own formalism and, from the opening "convention" of having the author himself appear onstage in the cast to the *Deus ex Machina* happy ending, the composer follows with grace and charm the whimsical unfolding of the literary classic.

A real love of Molière and an exquisite esthetic taste are immediately apparent, guiding Liebermann as instinctively away from the unsuitable tensions of his usual atonalism as they guided him toward the inclusion of a harpsichord in his orchestra. This instrument has appealed strongly to modern composers, highlighting the twentieth century's affinity to the pre-nineteenth-century writers; Liebermann's assignment of a major role to it was thus both logically and psychologically right, and his score is completely contemporary, without a trace of pseudo-classicism. It is also wholly—and newly—in the spirit of Molière.

The composer's real stature is perhaps not so immediately apparent from this opera alone, though it was things heard in it, together with his *Music for Orchestra* and the *Jazz Concerto* which prompted me to make an extensive investigation into the bulk of his output. This investigation has confirmed my first impression that Liebermann was seriously underestimated in the New York press.

This is a matter for regret, for he is a master of many of the things we are still trying to master. Our own composers, for instance, have tried and tried to bring about a respectable marriage between jazz and symphony, cliché being invariably the sole survivor, the unique pulse of vitality that animates jazz escaping somewhere along the way. Liebermann, after viewing us dispassionately from the distance of Europe, exuberantly preserved in his *Jazz Concerto* this very vitality, scrubbed bare of all cliché, the miracle being wrought by just that process of objectification that is his so valuable dramatically. Posing the jazz and symphonic ensembles as separate entities and contestants instead of trying to fuse them, he plays out his duel, the disparate behavior of the two groups being subtly linked by the fact that both play the game within the rules of the same twelve-tone row.

Problems concerning words-music that are plaguing America's burgeoning opera composers are deftly dealt with by Liebermann in innumerable new ways. In his *Music for Orchestra* the "point" is subtle; the words and music never sound

together, but the rhythmic structure of each musical stanza is patterned on the metrical design of the verse that precedes or follows it, and although the device is not apparent to the analytical mind, the subtle relationship in meter is immediately felt. In this work also the composer achieves that hardest of all hard things—a beautiful and natural transition from the state of absolute music to that of absolute speech; several times, and in several ways, the speaking voice enters and departs as naturally, as inevitably, as does a flute solo.

Our opera composers need to master the art of recitative, and whatever new substitutes there may be for this 'patter' system (for the fast development of plot) they urgently need to study the art of prosody, polished demonstrations of which Liebermann's opera scores offer in four languages—for the lack of this single technique has wrecked all but one or two American operas to date; no composer can hope to have his singers project in a theater over accompaniment thick or thin without good prosody.

Above all, the American composer, saturated as he is in the topical, "front page" approach of realism must learn an objective approach to story and subject matter that can lift journalism to the level of literature, put the timely in touch with the timeless, to make a classic. All these things, and besides them the great art of built-in pacing, are to be found in the writing of Liebermann.

He is to us a new figure on the horizon, a product of those hermetic war years when Europe's and America's developments became stranger to each other. He is a master of the musical theater in a time when our musical focus is sharply pointed in that direction, and it behooves us to regard him with respect.

LIEBERMANN: "School for Wives"

(opéra comique after Molière; libretto by Heinrich Strobel; English adaptation by Elisabeth Montagu); Robert Fischer (Poquelin); William Pickett (Arnolphe); Monas Harlan (Horace); Charmé Riesley (Georgette); Audrey Nossaman (Agnes); Richard Dales (Oronte); members of The Louisville Orchestra conducted by Moritz Bomhard. Louisville LOU 57-3 (two discs, three sides). Available by subscription only from the Louisville Philharmonic Society, 830 South Fourth Street, Louisville 3, Kentucky.

Those who did not hear "School for Wives" in its American productions may remedy that omission with the new Louisville recording just released. Also, those whose first impression of the work is dim now have an opportunity for re-evaluation in repeated hearings.

The performance is extremely good. Conductor Moritz Bomhard (whose Louisville opera commissioning program has been one of the chief factors in the new American opera boom) has a fine sense of nuance, of the big line containing the tiny detail that is the real essence of musical theater. William Pickett does a splendid job in the leading role of Arnolphe, though this beautiful voice feels more at home with a higher tessitura. In the miking of this—as of other works in this series—there is a tendency to pull down fortissimos and pump up pianissimos so that a mean average of *mf* is the end result. None the less, this recording is very good indeed and should be owned by all who consider themselves connoisseurs of modern opera.



The closing sextet of "School for Wives" in the New York City Opera production. Left to right: John Reardon (Poquelin), Mignon Dunn (Georgette), William Pickett (Arnolphe), Peggy Bonini (Agnes), Jon Crain (Horace), and Joshua Hecht (Oronte). Over their heads has just descended a cardboard "cloud" with a final reminder of the Beaumarchais maxim that is the cream of the operatic jest. —Photo by Sedge Le Blang

Record Reviews

THERE IS IN SOULS a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.

—William Cowper

ALBÉNIZ: *"Tango, Tango, Tango and other piano works"*; José Echániz, (piano). Westminster XWN-18431, \$3.98.

▲WESTMINSTER is misleading us. The title of this record would have one believe that it consists entirely of Albéniz and largely of tangos. Actually, there are only two short pieces of this exact nature in the entire contents. And only one side is devoted to Albéniz: *Tango in D, Malagueña, Granada, Sevilla, Cadiz, Tango in A minor* and *Rumores de la Caleta*. The really interesting thing about the release is not even mentioned on the jacket, and this is the entire side devoted to three sets of pieces by Federico Mompou: *Cancó i dansa, Scènes d'enfants, and Charmes*—all charming, inconsequential vignettes and thoroughly pleasing. Señor Echániz gives them his usual competent attention, although Albéniz' rhythmic flow seems impeded from time to time by what seems to me unwarranted rubato. Westminster's usually excellent piano sound adds value to the disc. —T.T.

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ARNOLD: *Homage to the Queen*; Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Robert Irving, RCA Victor LM-2037, \$3.98.

▲ON the night of June 2, 1953, a few hours after the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, a new ballet written especially for the occasion was presented in the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, by the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company (now The Royal Ballet). *Homage to the Queen* by Malcolm Arnold was that work, and it has been superbly recorded here by RCA Victor. This score is ideal ballet music—full of pomp and circumstance, elegance, and invention but not so as to divert one's attention from what is taking place on the stage. Andrew Porter's notes tell us that the idea of the choreography was to present the four elements, Earth, Water, Fire and Air, paying their homage to the newly crowned Queen. Every leading dancer in the company was called upon to take part in this gala work (choreographed by Frederick Ashton). The music is expertly orchestrated, with special prominence given the brass—not too surprising since the composer once was first trumpet of the London Philharmonic. —T.T.

J. S. BACH: *Preludes and Fugues in D* (B.G. 15:88), *F minor* (B.G. 15:104) *E minor* (B.G. 15:100), *B minor* (15:199); Carl Weinrich (organ). Westminster XWN-18427, \$3.98.

▲ORGANIST Carl Weinrich has a tendency to play mechanically at times. These performances, I think, caught him in one of his colder moods. His playing leans toward rhythmic inflexibility and quite rapid tempi which leave something to be desired as far as dramatic elements are concerned. The *E minor Prelude*, one of Bach's most moving organ works, suffers especially from this approach, I feel, as does the long and eloquent *B minor Prelude and Fugue*. In the *D Major Fugue* Weinrich attempts a half-staccato, and especially in the pedals the music becomes somewhat uneven and out of hand (or "out-of-foot", if you prefer). The organ is of course that of Varfrukyrka in Skänninge, Sweden, which Weinrich is using for all his Bach recordings (this release is Vol. 5). It is an almost ideal instrument for the purpose; small, clear and clean. The sound on this disc is full-bodied and resonant, although some of Weinrich's "Lab" recordings on this same instrument are more brilliant and "close-up", revealing with more subtlety the changes in registration. Walcha has recorded most of Bach's organ works on the Decca Archive series, and for my money the latter performs with more heart.

—D.H.M.

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J. S. BACH: *Toccata and Fugue in D minor* (BWV 565); *Prelude and Fugue in C* (BWV 545); *Prelude and Fugue in B minor* (BWV 544); *Passacaglia in C minor* (BWV 582); *Prelude and Fugue in E minor* (BWV 548); *Fantasia in G* (BWV 572); Anton Nowakowski (organ). London/Telefunken LGX-66059, \$2.49.

▲HOW should Bach be played? Are his organ works demonstrations of technical and formal mastery only, or are they essentially dramatic and romantic in character? There are arguments on both sides, but who would deny that the *D minor Toccata* or the *E minor Prelude* are close to the psychological—highly imaginative, if not romantic, compositions? At least one individual does not seem to think so

and he is Nowakowski. How anyone can play through these pieces and remain so apparently unmoved and cold is a mystery to me. Let me say that he is a performer with a fine sense of tempo and rhythm, and has fingers that are quite capable of overcoming the considerable demands of the music. But are we not entitled to something more? The organ, located at the Klosterkirche in Sorro, Denmark, is somewhat of a cross between a small mellow type and a larger more brilliant instrument. It emits pleasant and rich sounds indeed, and its quality provides what is for this listener the only dramatic intensity on the record. The fi is reasonably hi, although the surfaces on my copy were a trifle noisy. —D.H.M.

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J. S. BACH: *Suite No. 1 in G; Suite No. 3 in C*; Lillian Fuchs (viola). Decca DL-9914, \$3.98.

▲ORDINARILY, any discussion of Bach's Cello Suites performed on the viola might well begin with a word or two about the pleasures and problems of transcribing music in general. In this case, such a word would be beside the point. Though Lillian Fuchs undoubtedly walked into the recording studio with a viola in hand, the sound which emerges—impressive as it is—is not the sound of a viola but some tubby young bastard instrument with the build of a cello and the resonating chamber of a kettledrum. A glorious sound it is, in its way, but a viola it is not. Once this is taken into account and the mysterious operations of the microphone Frankenstein accepted, one can settle back to enjoy these wonderful suites and the artist's perceptive handling of them. The player of Bach, and particularly the solo string player, has a choice of approaches to the music. At one end of the gamut lies the almost romantic emphasis on melodic contours and the belief in disciplined rhythmic freedom; at the other is the totally straightforward production of the notes without much expression, through them, of the performer's own point of view. With Casals at the former end of the span, and several less individual performers who need not be named at the latter, we have a scale on which to place Lillian Fuchs, who is somewhere in the middle. She does not play Bach with the elasticity of the great cellist, but she knows what these suites are about and does not fail to emphasize what needs to be emphasized. These are thoughtful performances rather than exciting ones (and in spite of many opinions to the contrary, the Cello Suites can be exciting), but the viola is, after all, a thoughtful instrument and Miss Fuchs must share its temperament. —S.F.

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BARTÓK: *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion; Contrasts for Piano, Violin, and Clarinet*; (in the *Sonata*) Wilfrid Parry (piano), Iris Loveridge (piano),

Gilbert Webster (percussion), Jack Lees (percussion); (in the Contrasts) Parry; Frederick Grinke (violin), Jack Brymer (clarinet). Westminster XWN-18425, \$3.98.

(Sonata)
Stokowski.....Victor LM-1727
(Contrasts)

Mann, Drucker, Hambro.....Bartók-916

▲WHAT are needed in both performances, but chiefly in that of the ingenious sonata, are less restraint and more definition. Bartók in all of his music is specific not only as to exactly what tempi and dynamics he wants but also, in the Sonata at hand, precisely what size, weight and consistency the beaters and sticks for the percussion instruments are to be. (In one instance, he indicates that the cymbal is to be struck with the blade of a pocket knife.) The playing of the two pianists in the present recording reveals little of the architecture and its melodic structure. This is not to say that the performance is a bad one, but merely that more insight into the Sonata's complexities and more careful respect for the composer's written wishes would have made for more understanding on the part of the listener. The *Contrasts* have been delivered with greater effect by Mann, Drucker and Hambro. Westminster has managed the tricky sonic balances with crystal clarity. —A.K.

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BEETHOVEN: *Sonata in C sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2* ("Moonlight"); *Sonata in C minor, Op. 13* ("Pathétique"); *Sonata in F minor, Op. 57* ("Appassionata"); Raymond Lewenthal (piano). Westminster XWN-18400, \$3.98.

Schnabel.....Victor LCT-1155, LM-9500
Serkin.....Columbia ML-5164

▲JUDGING from his two releases this month, Lewenthal is certainly a most capable young pianist with a minimum of idiosyncrasies and a remarkable adaptability and affinity to both romantic and classical styles. It is a long step from Scriabin to Beethoven, but he appears to make the transition with considerable success. This *Pathétique* is definitely among the more restrained performances available, but it is warm. Lewenthal's restraint suits perfectly the first two movements of the *Moonlight*; for my taste, the last movement is more successful at a slightly faster tempo and with more *legato*. Lewenthal's style becomes appropriately more dramatic in the *Appassionata*—drama plus restraint, however, without the intensity of Serkin's overwhelmingly exciting and grandiose interpretation. Lewenthal's technique is for the most part smooth and effortless. Many pianists who are tempted to display their facility at the expense of the music; their playing often is shallow, casually "tossed-off". I am happy to report that this young man is a more serious-minded musician than many of his colleagues; he has integrity and, one might almost say, authority. —D.H.M.

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata No. 21 in C, Op. 53* ("Waldstein"); **PROKOFIEV:** *Sonata No. 4, Op. 29; Sarcasm, Op. 17, No. 3; Scriabin: Two Poems, Op. 32; Eugene Malinin (piano). Angel 35402, \$4.98 or \$3.48.*

("Waldstein")
Gieseking.....Angel 35024
Backhaus.....London LL-265
(Prokofiev)

Boukoff.....Westminster XWN-18369

▲AN interpretative composite of Malinin and Boukoff, whose recordings of Prokofiev's sonatas are to be reviewed in the next issue, would be well nigh ideal. The latter Russian's way with the keyboard is one of vertical incisiveness and steely power. He lacks what this somewhat younger virtuoso possesses in admirable quantity—a singing tone, and an ability to spin out a subtly phrased line. Malinin's efforts at dramatic projection, however, sound forced and strident. Although the C major theme in the final movement of the "Waldstein" emerges in meltingly beautiful phrases and the second movement in elegiac depth, the "Waldstein" in its totality is not a lyric piece. There is drama in its haunting pages that reaches fortissimo climaxes and sudden contrasts of light and shade. It is precisely here that Malinin's performance needs supplementing. The same can be said for his Prokofiev sonata, although *Sarcasm* and the poems of Scriabin are pleasingly delineated. The sonics are a bit cloudy. —A.K.

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BERLIOZ: *Overtures—Les Francs-Juges, King Lear; Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. Westminster W-LAB-7053, \$7.50.*

Beecham, Royal Phil.....Columbia ML-5064
Wolff, Paris Cons.....London LL-1297

▲DUPERSONIC finale to Westminster's triptych of Berlioz Overtures (see May and June issues for reviews of the first two records). Facile, adroit readings by Sir Adrian of early, early Berlioz, and if we cannot quite sense his just having performed an autopsy it is because his approach is strictly Emily Bronte, not Charles Addams! —J.B.L.

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BIZET: *Symphony in C; STRAVINSKY:* *Pulcinella Suite; Bamberg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Lehmann. Decca DL-9901, \$3.98.*

BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 3 in F, Op. 90; Tragic Overture, Op. 81; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Fritz Lehmann. Decca DL-9899, \$3.98.*

Stokowski (Bizet).....Victor LM-1706
Markevitch (Stravinsky).....Angel 35143
Koussevitzky (Third).....Victor LM-1025
Beinum (Overture).....London LL-735

▲THE late Fritz Lehmann made these recordings a while back—the Brahms ones definitely a couple or more years ago. The overture was previously released on a ten-inch disc (DL-4048). There is a warmheartedness to Lehmann's treatment of the Brahms sym-

phony but little feeling for its dramatic tension. It is strange how conductors fail to recognize the import of Brahms' marking of the opening movement—*Allegro con brio*. Most German conductors are inclined to treat this movement and the Finale as though they were cut from the same cloth as the second and third movements. I remember Mengelberg, in his heyday, rising to the dramatic pulsation of these movements. In comparison with his performance of the Third Symphony, Lehmann's rendition of the "Tragic" Overture must be labeled capricious. The symphony deserves to be heard, but the overture must be ruled out of court. While one senses that a lifetime of musical competence lies behind the shaping of all these works, the halo of a somewhat apathetic *Kapellmeister* remains all too apparent. One hardly could chide the conductor for his treatment of the buoyant and zestful symphony by Bizet, or the neoclassical Stravinsky suite. However, the inferred *Gemütlichkeit* hardly is in keeping with the musical spirit intended by either composer. Strange as it may seem, the performances are listenable and I have a sneaking suspicion that those who enjoy works like these as background music (some do!) would favor these over any others. The reproduction is realistically satisfying in quality. —P.H.R.

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BRAHMS: *Song of Destiny; Academic Festival Overture; LISZT: Psalm XIII; Beecham Choral Society with Walter Midgley (tenor) and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Angel 35400, \$4.98 or \$3.48.*

▲THE *Schicksalslied* dates from 1871. It is therefore a thoroughly mature work and is generally conceded to rank among his best. The Hölderlin text contrasts the lot of mankind with that of the blessed spirits in heaven, but whereas the poet leaves us with the image of man's fall, the musician rounds out his music with a beautifully comforting postlude. Oddly, though this is the third recording of the piece, there has not yet been one using the original German text. And though Beecham has found a better translation than those favored by Monteux and Bruno Walter, it is not easy to catch the words without following the accompanying leaflet. Aside from this, the performance is splendid—far more satisfactory than either of its predecessors. The sound of the orchestra and chorus is full and rich; every instrument, as well as every voice, sings. Sonically neither of the earlier versions is comparable. The *Academic Festival* seems to have been a challenge to Sir Thomas, for he could hardly be expected to take the traditional path in so well-known a work. What he does is to adopt a rather deliberate pace and polish up the numerous details Brahms has writ-

ten into his work. In doing so he loses some of the heartiness that is a vital part of the overture. He holds our attention, though he does not altogether convince us. The solo instruments, as they come forward from time to time, are a delight to the ear, and the whole orchestra makes a magnificent sound. The Liszt *Psalm* is in the strongest possible contrast, for it is much more chromatic, more tortured music. In this the age-old translation of the Rev. Dr. Troutbeck is used, and surely it is no help to the music. Beecham, however, makes a strong case for the work, with his forces in superb form. Possibly Mr. Midgely might have sung more forcefully, but he has excellent taste and an adequate voice. —P.L.M.

BRITTEN: *Les Illuminations*; **RAVEL:** *Shéhérazade*; Janine Micheau (soprano) with Lamoureux Orchestra, conducted by Paul Sacher and Jean Fournet. **DEBUSSY:** *Trois Ballades de François Villon*; **RAVEL:** *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée*; Camille Maurane (baritone) with Lamoureux Orchestra, conducted by Jean Fournet. Epic LC-3355, \$3.98.

▲IT may seem that Britten is oddly assorted with Debussy and Ravel, but as a bargain counter disc this record should prove attractive. Micheau is not at her best in *Les Illuminations*. In putting pressure on her voice she robs it of its appealing quality; at the same time she is not able to make the Rimbaud text clearly audible. The music seems to me better suited to the two tenors who have recorded it. Of these Peter Pears, whose interpretations of this composer's music are inevitably the most authoritative, is best recorded, though I find myself preferring the richer sound of Helmut Krebs' voice. In *Shéhérazade* Micheau comes into her own; here her voice is crystalline and expressive. It is not to be held against her or her conductor that they do not turn in so magically atmospheric a performance as Danco and Ansermet, or that they are not so effectively recorded. The other Ravel cycle and the Debussy are excellently sung by Maurane. Again the recording is rather dry, but I question that either cycle has been more satisfactorily sung for records in recent years. —P.L.M.

BUSONI: *Sonata No. 2 for violin and piano, Op. 36a*; Max Rostal (violinist), Noel Mewton-Wood (pianist). Westminster XWN-18426, \$3.98.

▲THIS is a curious work which seems, at first, to take a long, long time to get from its front door to its own back yard. The question is, does it go anywhere at all? The suspicion that perhaps it does not is aggravated by its form: division into nine parts, some of which lead without pause and with barely perceptible tempo change into the following section. But the piece cannot be put aside without further ado. In spite of its rather heavy burden of

passionate romantic melodies it is not idle music, and the listener somehow feels that Busoni's intentions in writing it were not idle either. One thing he did accomplish—a work in which musical content, fragmentary though it is, is matched but not overbalanced by impressive display material for the performers. Both Rostal and Mewton-Wood do a first-rate job; their command of flexible dynamics is a thing to marvel at, and this very quality was, from all reports, close to the pianist Busoni's heart. Fine studio sound. —S.F.

CRESTON: *Dance Overture*; **HIVELY:** *Summer Holiday*; **HAUFRECHT:** *Square Set*; **SUNJUAN:** *La Macumba*; Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Academia di Santa Cecilia conducted by Alfredo Antonini. Composers Recordings CRI-111, \$4.98.

▲THE most interesting work here, at least for me, is the Creston. The others sound like little more than pot-boilers. Not that I blame a composer for writing a pot-boiler; most of their economic situations are a little less than ideal. But with all the music of real artistic weight being written today, why must CRI choose a collection of comparative insignificance? Oh well. . . The *Dance Overture* is a cleverly constructed little piece in which the three sections (Spanish bolero, English country dance, French loure) are connected quite skillfully without a break. The musical ideas seem good, and they are well orchestrated. The Hively impresses me as being somewhat anemic both musically and orchestrally. Haufrecht's collection of square dances is lively, fairly interesting, and considerably more sophisticated than you will hear in any barn on Saturday night. *La Macumba* left me indifferent. Alfredo Antonini is, I think, a conductor of exceptional gifts who has been much underrated in the past. The Oslo Philharmonic (used only in the Creston) is to my ears more responsive in nuance and shading than is the Italian ensemble. The recording is of high quality. —D.H.M.

DELIBES: *Suites from "Sylvia" and "Coppélia"*; L'Orchestre du Théâtre National de l'Opéra conducted by André Cluytens. Angel 35416, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

Monteux, Boston. Victor LM-1913
Boult, Phil. Prom. Westminster XWN-18241

▲THE divertissements that comprise the traditional suites from Delibes' best known ballets have always puzzled me in that they are for the most part representative of neither the plot nor the most attractive music in either score. With *Coppélia* in particular, a far more effective experience could be achieved merely by recording the delightful Act II music (the invasion of Coppélius' fantastic workroom) in its entirety. Dramatically, I find Cluytens convincing in the lyric scenes but deficient in projecting the

flavor of a czardas or mazurka. The *Cortège de Bacchus* (Sylvia, Act III) also falls short in coloration and character. Except for an edginess in the trebles, the engineers have done an able recording job. —A.K.

DOWLAND: *Pieces for Lute*; Julian Bream (lute). Westminster XWN-18429, \$3.98.

▲THE capacity to relish many moods was an Elizabethan's birthright, and John Dowland, to judge from this selection of his uncounted lute pieces, was Elizabethan to the core. The prevailing outlook is melancholy—a gentle summertime melancholy that falls easily on twentieth-century ears; from the *Lachrimae Antiquae Pavan* through Sir Henry Upton's *Funerall* we bow to the composer's mood without objection, and acquiesce to the unblinking self-summary of his eleventh title on this record: *Semper Dowland, Semper Dolens*. But an Elizabethan was versatile above all, and the mental climate of Denmark, when Dowland was court musician there, seems to have dispelled gloom in favor of the gusto of such a piece as *King of Denmark's Galliard*. *My Lady Hunson's Puffe*, another of the more famous pieces included in this very good selection, is matched in its sauciness by *Mrs. Vaux's Gigge*, and the total effect is to make us glad indeed that the lute did not die with the Elizabethan Age. Julian Bream, who may be judged a master of the instrument at twenty-four, contributes to this resurrection in fine style. He plays with leisurely confidence and a sensitive ear for dynamic shading and tone-contrast. He has produced a most attractive and appealing record. Close-up sound. —S.F.

DUKAS: *Variations, Interlude and Finale on a Theme by Rameau*; **FRANCK:** *Prelude, Chorale and Fugue*; Lenore Engdahl (piano). M-G-M E-3421 \$3.98.
Rubinstein (Franck) Victor LM-1822
Katchen (Franck) London LL-823

▲THE Franck is, of course, one of the keyboard masterworks. Despite its baroque-sounding title it is deeply emotional, chiefly rhapsodic in character. Undoubtedly it has had better performances on disc than the present one; Engdahl seems strangely cold to the romantic message of this music. The opening measures take on a Debussyan tinge, and parts of the fugue sound amazingly like Bach. Add to this the fact that her technique is far from flawless—not only are there slips, but some distinctly wrong chords—and I am forced to admit that the two performances heading this paragraph are in every way preferable. The Dukas is rather interesting but hardly a masterpiece. There is a distinct improvement in Engdahl's playing here, and she seems to have much more sympathy with this style. Also, it is the only performance of this work currently available and for this reason should not be overlooked.

M-G-M's recording cannot be described as good. The highs are decidedly deficient and the piano tone has that "through-a-velvet-curtain" effect, hardly up to most present-day standards. —D.H.M.

DVOŘÁK: *String Quartet No. 7 in A flat, Op. 105*; Janáček Quartet. Decca DL-9919, \$3.98.

▲SELDOM is Dvořák in a hurry, and it is to his credit that, when he feels like wandering down musical byways without looking at his watch, we find his company stimulating enough to come with him without looking at ours. This quartet finds him in an un-urgent mood, full of ideas sentimental, gay, expansive, animated, and leisurely, and if we do not worry too much about the cohesion of individual movements we will feel our time with this work is decidedly well spent. Part of its secret is Dvořák's natural skill in treating the four instruments as individuals without sacrificing the melodic character of the music they make together. The Janáček players follow his intentions with enthusiasm and very good technique. —S.F.

Flamenco! Vicente Escudero (dancer-singer), Mario Escudero (guitar), Carmita García (castanets), Pablo Miguel (piano). Columbia CL-982, \$3.98.

▲FROM the jacket notes: "I was born in Valladolid in the heart of Old Castile. I was raised among the gypsy race. I know their laws and their language extensively. I began to dance at the age of ten in the streets on the sewer covers of the city. . . . I soon abandoned the city to dance in the country fairs, earning my living by passing the plate at the end of each dance. When there was no train to hop to another town, I used to throw my shoes over my shoulder in order not to wear them out, and I would walk barefoot. Many a time I was without money because I sent it to my mother, and then had to catch the train without paying to get to another village. In this milieu I was persecuted by the inspectors and often beaten, but despite hunger and beatings, I continued to dance. In this way, step by step, I have been going up without anyone's help and without academies." Thus writes Escudero, one of the most natural artistic talents of our time. His art is that of the gypsies—their wild, pulsating rhythms, the castanets with which they punctuate and accompany their fiery dance-and-song language, and their wailing incantations, whose underlying

GLIERE: *Quartet No. 4 in F minor, Op. 83*; **MAISKOVSKY:** *Quartet No. 13 in A minor, Op. 86*; Beethoven Quartet. Westminster XWN-18423, \$3.98.

▲SINCE these two Russians are usually labeled "representatives of contemporary conservatism" behind the Iron Curtain (Glière died in 1950, Miaskovsky last year), their chamber music should prove interesting in a sort of peeping Tom sense as well as a purely musical one. From a peep at these quartets only, Miaskovsky appears to me to have it all over his older compatriot, whose pupil he was. His work embodies an extraordinary amount of activity—considerable solo work for cello as well as violin, snatches of fugue, a conscious building and diminishing of sonority, a dwelling on melodies of Oriental cast—all handled by the composer with boiling energy and a sense of plan which is communicated to the listener. As for the Glière, I find it a tedious affair. Melody follows upon melody with bustling accompaniments which seem meaningless; fugues appear now and then for no very good reason; and pure sound is churned up with a vengeance. On first



Escudero: "step by step"

or principal theme is always religious in character. Although one must see the ageless Spaniard to fully appreciate him and his excellent band, surprisingly enough a great deal of the spell of a live Escudero performance nevertheless projects across the record. Aside from the master himself, the superb guitar playing of Mario Escudero is particularly noteworthy. Columbia has skillfully balanced the reproduction. —A.K.

hearing it seemed like a long trip through a dark forest, and I almost gave up hope of coming out on the other side. The Beethoven Quartet (made up of Russian personnel who play Russian music in Russian territory) is a skillful ensemble; sheer grit is among its notable attributes. —S.F.

GOLDMARK: *Violin Concerto in A minor, Op. 28*; **DVOŘÁK:** *Violin Concerto in A minor, Op. 53*; Bronislaw Gimpel (Violin) with the Southwest German Radio Orchestra conducted by Rolf Reinhardt, Vox PL 10-290, \$4.98.

(Goldmark)
Rybar. West. XWN-18454
(Dvorak)
Magyar. Epic LC-3173
Oistrakh. Vang. VRS-6027
Martzy. Decca DL-9858
▲WHEN Nathan Milstein played the Goldmark Concerto with the New York Philharmonic this past season it seemed almost like a première, for no one could remember when the 79-year-old work had last been heard in Carnegie Hall, so seldom is it performed. Few violinists have it in their repertory and conductors rarely suggest it for visiting soloists. Yet it was a joy to hear again a score I had been fond of many years ago, and many others shared my pleasure with it on this occasion. Certainly it is not cast in the mold of such great works as the Beethoven and the Brahms, but it deserves a place for its warmth, its unabashed romanticism and friendliness—qualities strangely lacking in its composer, who was meek, timid, and apologetic. Perhaps like Rachmaninov, whose music clearly belied the man's dour exterior, Goldmark could express only in his music what he could not in his person. Dvořák's Violin Concerto went through many creative and revision pains before it finally was introduced in Vienna in 1883. The concerto is dedicated to Joachim, who sustained great interest in the work from its first draft in 1879. It has never been a particularly popular work and performances of it are infrequent—not a surprising fact, for the work is long on craftsmanship and short on inspiration. To me it is excellent Music to Gather Wool By. The violin playing of Bronislaw Gimpel has been unfamiliar to us, but these performances are of high standard. His tone is flexible and warm and he is a commendable technician. The orchestra performs effectively, although the recording quality, while acceptable, is not of the best. —T.T.

GRIEG: *Sigurd Jorsalfar Suite, Op. 56*; *Two Elegiac Melodies, Op. 34*; *Symphonic Dances, Op. 64*; Bamberg Symphony (in *Sigurd Jorsalfar*) and Pro Musica Symphony, Vienna, conducted by Edouard Van Remoortel. Vox PL-10330, \$4.98.

▲REMOORTELS' second recorded excursion into the music of Grieg is in almost every way as impressive a performance

as his first (Vox PL-9840). He brought to the *Holberg Suite*, to mention just one of the compositions on that disc, a freshness and vitality which made the music spring to life. Here the young Belgian conductor impresses again with his keen rhythmic sense, fine knowledge of style, and sure grasp of material. The music represents Grieg at his best: the two lovely *Elegiac Melodies* (*The Last Spring* and *Heartwounds*) are for strings alone, and both the popular *Sigurd Jorsalfar Suite* and the brilliant *Symphonic Dances* are scored for full orchestra. If I have any reservation whatever about these excellent performances, it is only that Remortel at times lacks the pathos, the tenderness, and the finer subtleties that these works require and which are imbedded in them by such an experienced conductor, for example, as Beecham. The recorded sound is good. —I.K.

HAYDN: *Concerto in D for Flute and Strings*; **LECLAIR:** *Concerto in C for Flute, Strings and Harpsichord, Op. 7 No. 3*; **PERGOLESI:** *Concerto No. 2 in D for Flute Traverso*; Camillo Wanaussek (flute) with the Pro Musica Chamber Orchestra of Vienna conducted by Paul Angerer. Vox PL-10,150, \$4.98.

Barwahser (Haydn).....Epic LC-3075
▲IF this recording may be taken as a fair indication, Camillo Wanaussek is one of the most polished flutists around. His tone is sweet and pure, and contains less of that annoying "breathiness" than that of many of his colleagues. I would place this performance of the Haydn Concerto close to the top of the list, all things considered. The tempi are on the relaxed side, and Angerer provides a sensitive background. Whether this disputed work is by Haydn or his contemporary Leo Hofmann need not concern us here; it is a charming work which wears well. Leclair's style is close to Corelli's in its simple purity, but is somewhat more virtuosic. Again, Wanaussek is impressive with his smooth, effortless technique and his nearly perfect tonal control. Except for the truly moving *Grave*, the Pergolesi is less interesting than either of the other two. Not so with the performance, however; it is difficult to imagine this work done with more sensitivity and understanding. Vox's recording is excellent, although one could ask for a little less reverberation. —D.H.M.

HAYDN: *Symphony No. 92 in G* ("Oxford"); *Symphony No. 86 in D*; The Scarlatti Orchestra conducted by Franco Caracciolo. Angel 35325, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

Koussevitzky, Boston.....Victor LM-1102
▲BOTH of these well recorded performances are noteworthy for their painstaking organization and intelligence of presentation. The earlier, unjustly neglected symphony is a delight of bubbly efferves-

cence. Conductor Caracciolo's disdain for vibrato makes for a particularly rough-hewn, scratchy quality in the strings, which may or may not be to your taste. —A.K.

KHACHATURIAN: *Violin Concerto*; Ruggiero Ricci (violin) with the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Anatole Fistoulari. London LL-1537, \$3.98.

Oistrakh, Khachaturian.....Angel 35244
 Kogan, Khachaturian.....Concert Hall CHS-1300
▲ONE could argue the merits and demerits of this music for hours. It is probably close to the truth to say that, while it is a smoothly constructed and richly orchestrated work, it may be a bit too melodically and expressively trite to satisfy completely the more sophisticated listener. But as is often the case with such compositions, an excellent performance can make the music sound better than it really is. The above-noted Oistrakh-Khachaturian recording is undoubtedly such a performance. The present London disc is not to be ignored, however. Ricci's ease of execution has already established him as a first-rank violinist despite his relative youth, and this is displayed here to a remarkable degree. Fistoulari and his Londoners play with precision and feeling throughout and the balance between soloist and orchestra is well-nigh perfect. Especially fine, I feel, is the *Andante sostenuto*, which is performed at a broader tempo than is sometimes encountered, thereby gaining in depth and sustained lyricism. Ricci attains a richness of tone here which is not so often associated with his playing as is his brilliant technique. All told, it is a smooth performance, though perhaps not as "Russian" in feeling as it could be. The engineers, too, have etched some fine sound on this disc; from top to bottom it is clear, rich and well-balanced. —D.H.M.

"Like a spoil of gems unmined..."

Horowitz in Recital — SCHUMANN: *Variations on a Theme by Clara Wieck* (Third movement from *Sonata in F minor, Op. 14*); **D. SCARLATTI:** *Sonata in E, Largo* 23; **CHOPIN:** *Mazurka in B flat minor, Op. 24, No. 4*; *Polonaise-Fantasia, Op. 61*; **HAYDN:** *Sonata in E flat, Op. 78*; **BRAHMS:** *Intermezzo in B flat minor, Op. 117, No. 2*; **MOSZKOWSKI:** *Etincelles*; **SCRIBIN:** *Preludes—Op. 11, No. 5 in D*; *Op. 21 in G sharp minor*; **SOUSA:** *Stars and Stripes Forever* (Transcribed by Horowitz); Vladimir Horowitz (piano). RCA Victor LM-1957, \$3.98.

▲ASIDE from representing music making at the genius level, this record is a masterful study in technical and stylistic control. Whether he is expounding the baroque art

KODÁLY: *Hâry János Suite*; **BARTÓK:** *Hungarian Sketches*; *Rumanian Folk Dances*; Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra conducted by Antal Dorati. Mercury MG-50132, \$3.98.

(Kodaly).....Victor LM-1973
 Rodzinski.....West. W-LAB-7034
 Beinum.....Epic LC-3290
▲FOR sheer excitement, Dorati's *Hâry János* would be hard to beat. My favorite has been the Beinum, but I must admit that this one presents very strong competition indeed. The cimbalom part, performed by Toni Koves, has rarely been heard to such advantage in recordings. I would guess that this version will be one of the most popular on the market, and deservedly so. The Bartók selections (both LP premières), make a happy coupling with the Kodály. The two styles have much in common. The *Hungarian Sketches* are very sweet and sentimental settings in a folk-tune genre. The *Rumanian Dances*, originally written for piano and often performed with violin and piano, are presented here in their 1917 arrangement for orchestra. Many listeners, including your reviewer, prefer them this way. Dorati conducts with energy



and with obvious sympathy. The recording is in the best tradition of hi-fi demonstration discs. —D.H.M.

of Scarlatti, the ethereal exotics of Scriabin, or Sousa's *Stars and Stripes Forever*, the tints and shades of color and manner of projection are exactly right. No hint of the bravura employed in Chopin's *Polonaise-Fantasia* is detectable in the meticulously clear delivery of Haydn's E flat Sonata, nor is Brahms projected with the same romanticism as Schumann. In short, there is only one Horowitz. Although poor health has kept him from the concert halls, his recordings fortunately continue to come. Since most of the contents of this release were taped during actual concerts, a cough or some other reminder of audience presence is here and there audible in the reproduction. But who wouldn't gratefully accept diamonds, even if they had a little dust on them? —A.K.

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rd Guide

LISZT: *Concerto No. 1 in E flat; Hungarian Fantasia*; Gyorgy Cziffra (piano) with the Paris Conservatory Orchestra conducted by Pierre Dervaux. Angel 35436, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

(Concerto)
Kempff.....London LL-1072
Foldes.....Decca DL-9888
(Fantasia)
Arrau.....Columbia ML-4665

▲IS it so indefinable, after all, that certain something that distinguishes one "wow" performance from another? To me, a Hungarian of this intelligence and breadth playing Liszt is as right in drama and sweep as a Pole like Smeterlin with his rhythmically unique Chopin, which is to say that, in the case of composers whose output is characteristically national, a great performer of the same birthright almost has it made. Under hands like these, and with superior co-

MENDELSSOHN: *Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 25*; **R. STRAUSS:** *Burleske in D minor*; Poldi Mildner (piano) with the RIAS Orchestra conducted by Artur Rother. Telefunken LGX-66062, \$2.49.

(Strauss)
Serkin, Ormandy.....Columbia ML-5168
(Mendelssohn)
Katin, Collins.....London LL-1453

▲ALTHOUGH both works are well articulated, little of the deeper aspects of either is exposed. Mildner's approach is rigid and sometimes percussive, particularly in the second movement of the Mendelssohn. *Burleske* lacks the whimsy and the ardor so well realized by Serkin. Too-close microphoning, clanging treble, and slips in pitch do not add to the appeal of the release.
—A.K.

MENDELSSOHN: *Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64*; **BEETHOVEN:** *Romance No. 1 in G Major, Op. 40; Romance No. 2 in F Major, Op. 50*; Johanna Martzy (violin) and the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Paul Kletzki. Angel 35236, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲ANOTHER Mendelssohn *Violin Concerto* is hardly news, but a performance such as this one is. The young Hungarian violinist Johanna Martzy has been hailed for her recorded performances of the Brahms Concerto and the Bach unaccompanied violin sonatas, and she continues her fine achievements with a stunning performance of both the Mendelssohn and the two Beethoven *Romances*. From the very opening measures of the Concerto this proves to be not an ordinary performance of a much recorded work but that of a musician whose personality will dominate. The playing is exciting, the violin soars, and the music captivates. The whole is carried off in splendid style with good orchestral support from Kletzki and the Philharmonians. Much the same can be said for the second side, but the *Romances* are, of course, less



operation from the conductor and engineers, there is no such thing as a war-horse, but only a War and Peace Horse, a magic steed. *Va, magnifique, va, va, va!* Ask for Tzif-fra.
—J.B.L.

virtuosic in character than the Mendelssohn. Miss Martzy's superior musicianship again contributes to a pair of fine performances. I have purposely avoided listing the alternate versions of these works (many of which are excellent) for I believe that this one should stand by itself on the virtues of a new musician's outstanding artistry.
—I.K.

MENDELSSOHN: *Songs Without Words, Nos. 1 in E, 6 in G minor, 12 in F sharp minor, 16 in A, 18 in A flat, 20 in E flat, 21 in G minor, 22 in F, 25 in G, 29 in A minor, 30 in A, 33 in B flat, 34 in C, 40 in D, 42 in B flat, 45 in C, 47 in A*; Walter Gieseking (piano). Angel 35428, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

Dorfmann (complete).....Victor LM-6128

▲THERE are few who would deny that Gieseking could produce a rounded and pearly tone of great purity and cool beauty. On this merit alone, these performances here are worth your time. But other aspects of his style, if not alarming, are at least open to some criticism. Gieseking uses surprisingly little pedal, and this adds not a little choppiness to Mendelssohn's fluid, legato phrases. Also, there is at times a disturbing unevenness of touch in accompanimental figures. This is especially evident in No. 18 (*Duetto*); here is a fault that most pianists will recognize as the sin of sins in music of this nature. Of course there are places where Gieseking's cool *secco* style is, at least to my ears, in perfect taste. For instance, the *Spring Song* is beautifully balanced, and bubbles and ripples like water. The *Spinning Song* is played with meticulous care and control. Dorfmann's approach forms an interesting contrast to Gieseking's. She is, in the main, more subjective, flowing, and warm. Her legato is much more song-like; her style is generally vocal where Gieseking's is harp-like. Angel's recording is generally excellent.
—D.H.M.

MENDELSSOHN: *Trio No. 1 in D minor, Op. 49*; **HAYDN:** *Trio No. 1 in G*; Beaux Arts Trio (Menahem Pressler, piano; Daniel Guilet, violin; Bernard Greenhouse, cello). M-G-M E-3420, \$3.98.

▲GORGEOUSLY expressive playing of the Mendelssohn. This is an interpretation that lives and breathes and far outclasses any other, including the restrained and mannered effort of the "million-dollar-trio" (Heifetz-Rubinstein-Piatigorsky) on Victor. The overside "Trio No. 1" of Haydn is of course not the first at all; it dates from 1795, so that someone at Breitkopf & Härtel goofed when the works were numbered. The enthusiasm from the accompanying Mendelssohn must have spilled over, for what results is a reading of *Zigeuner* abandon. The romantic ardor (*à la* Leopold Auer) is fine, but oh, those wild glissandi!! Whether or not it is Haydn is an academic question; certainly it is evocative listening. Both are well treated by the microphone.
—A.K.

MOZART: *Symphony No. 29 in A, K.201; Serenade No. 9 in D, K.320* ("Posthorn"); Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam conducted by Eduard van Beinum. Epic LC-3354, \$3.98.

Koussevitzky, Boston.....Camden CAL-160 ("Posthorn")

Van Remoortel, Pro Mus.....Vox PL-9890

▲IT is probably the in-between length of Mozart's divertimenti and serenades that prevents them from being better known, for they are usually too long for use as concert openers and, if a concerto hasn't already been programmed, too short for a second number. Unless the conductor has scheduled an all-Mozart concert, a more modern work will usually follow the intermission. In Mozart's day, of course, musical programs were at least twice the length of today's, and often they were devoted to the works of one composer. In the case of the present serenade the loss is ours, for the "Posthorn" surely ranks with Mozart's most inspired music. Van Beinum and his excellent orchestra play with a warm affection. The silken string tone is just right, as is the masterful woodwind playing in the rondo and witty second minuet. The A major Symphony makes an ideal discmate. A bit more subjectivity would have made the performance that much more attractive, but this is none the less Mozart playing of rare caliber. The engineers had a good day, too.
—A.K.

MOZART: *Serenade No. 10 in B flat* (for winds), K. 361; Members of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Fritz Lehmann. Decca DL-9918, \$3.98.

Ansermet, Suisse Rom.....London LL-1274

▲NOT even a genius such as Mozart could contrive to hold audience attention for forty minutes with so limited a range of tone colors. Various sections, particularly the theme and variations, stand out

as remarkable in concept, but by and large this work seems to me to be pervaded by a sameness of sound. The instrumentalists here perform ably, although here and there a lighter tone would have been welcome. The performance is well reproduced.

—A.K.

MOZART: *Symphony No. 33 in B flat, K. 319*; *Symphony No. 36 in C, K. 425* ("Linz"); Symphony Orchestra of the Bavarian Radio conducted by Eugen Jochum. Decca DL-9920, \$3.98.

("Linz")

Walter, Col. Sym. Columbia DSL-224
Reiner, Chicago Victor LM-6036
(K. 319)

Leinsdorf, London Westminster XWN-18186

▲**JOCHUM** continues to add to his reputation as a classicist of fine intelligence and an orchestral craftsman of rare ability. If his interpretation of *Allegro assai* (first movement of the K.319) is fast for one's taste, one must also concede that the delivery is light as a feather and crystal clear in texture. Oddly, however, the earlier symphony is infused with a gay and ingratiating warmth, while the "Linz", although beautiful in tone, is cool and detached. The reproduction is nicely clear.

—A.K.

MOZART: *Symphony No. 38 in D, K. 504* ("Prague"); *Symphony No. 39 in E flat, K. 543*; Bamberg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Joseph Keilberth. Telefunken LGX-66054, \$2.49.

(K. 504)

Leinsdorf, London Westminster XWN-18116

(K. 543)

Walter, N. Y. Phil. Columbia ML-5014

MENOTTI: *The Unicorn, the Gorgon and the Manticore, or The Three Sundays of a Poet*; Chorus and Instrumental Ensemble of the New York City Ballet conducted by Thomas Schippers; Angel 35437, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲THIS "madrigal fable for chorus, ten dancers and nine instruments" was first produced at the Library of Congress in October of 1956, and then brought to the New York City Center. The idea and the composer's medium of expression were both novel and successfully realized. This recording of the musical part of the production proves that the score can be enjoyed without benefit of staging. On the whole it seems to me the most effective Menotti has given us in some years; certainly it is the most accomplished he has composed to date. It is also virtuoso music, both in its composition and in its requirements for performance. The writing is full of inventiveness, never weighing the music down. One thing that is likely to sell it to the uninitiated listener is that the words are always set intelligibly, so that one does not have to follow either score or libretto to get their full impact. The piece is pure fantasy; the moral that is brought out in the final madrigal is not to be taken too seriously, for the com-

▲**KEILBERTH** brings a fine understanding and a good sense of balance to these scores. He seems to prefer a drier orchestral timbre than is usual, and a lack of vibrato in the strings. Unfortunately, the security of this orchestra is not such that it can convincingly project tonal colorations without the left hand tremolo in the bowed instruments and similar devices in the other sections of the ensemble. This may also account for the frequent lapses in intonation. As to style Keilberth's readings are narrow in scale, particularly in the two final movements of the *E flat*. His work tends to be vertical and measured rather than songful and delicately phrased. My own preference still lies with Walter in the later symphony. The "Prague" awaits a really definitive version on microgroove. —A.K.

▲**OFFENBACH:** "*La Vie Parisienne*"—

Excerpts; René Doria, André Gabriel, André Guidot, Charles Harbell, Lucien Huberty, Maurice Faure, Julien Giovanetti, Pierre Gianotti, Dario Moreno, and Jean Perédes with René Alix Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Marcel Cariven. Epic LC-3344, \$3.98.

Soloists, Lamoureux Orch. Vox PL-21,000

▲**AMERICANS** are likely to think of "*La Vie Parisienne*" as a ballet, for that is the way many of its tunes are known. It may even be that the terrific effect of some of these tunes when we first hear them in their original medium is partially due to this familiarity. As one listens to this abridged performance one wonders if another score exists so full of tongue-

poser-poet's touch is light. If he had struck a little deeper, indeed, he might have achieved real greatness. But one hardly misses that quality in this delightful and expert performance. —P.L.M.



Four of the principal dancers in the Ballet Society-sponsored production (choreography by John Butler) at the New York City Center: Nicholas Magallanes (The Poet) is surrounded by the three "pain-wrought children of his fancy"—clockwise, Richard Thomas (The Manticore), Arthur Mitchell (The Unicorn), and Eugene Tanner (The Gorgon). All are members of the New York City Ballet. Others shown in the Angel booklet but not identified are Barbara Milberg and Wilma Curley. Leading dancers not shown are Janet Reed and Roy Tobias. —Photo by William McCracken

twisters! Shortly after the beginning of the recording is one beginning *Je suis Brésilien*: everyone knows the tune, but for the singer it is a real endurance test. Among many other choice things is an ensemble, *Votre habit à cracqué dans le dos*, which for sheer exalted nonsense beats anything I have heard for a long time. It is noted on the jacket that this recording, made in France, was awarded the *Grand prix du disque*. Small wonder, for its cast is thoroughly versed in this kind of music, and they all have a perfectly wonderful time. Several of their names are familiar from recordings of a more serious nature, but we must remember that in France they take their Offenbach quite seriously. In themselves the voices are not notable for tonal beauty, but this is unimportant. The release recalls an earlier selection from this operetta conducted by Jules Gressier and issued here by Vox. There is somewhat more music included in this new version; otherwise the honors are more or less equally divided. —P.L.M.

▲**ROSSINI:** "*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*"; Giulietta Simionata (Rosina); Rina Cavalieri (Berta); Alvinio Misciano (Almaviva); Ettore Bastianini (Figaro); Cesare Siepi (Don Basilio); Fernando Corena (Don Bartolo); Arturo La Porta (Fiorello); Giuseppe Zampieri (Officer); Maggio Musicale Fiorentino Chorus and Orchestra, conducted by Alberto Erede. London set XLLA-51, three discs, \$14.94.

▲**ONCE** again London presents buyers of an opera set with a vocal score, this time the ancient Novello edition with Rosina's lesson scene aria added in its proper place. Not to seem ungrateful, I suspect the novice in score reading will face a real challenge trying to keep up with the various cuts and the text in this recitative-less score. As a recording, and all in all as a performance, this is the best "*Barber*" to date. The whole, indeed, is better than the sum of its parts. Erede has done nothing finer on discs; the performance has life and sparkle throughout. The ensembles are magnificent. But the solos are often less than that. Simionata, of course, is a well-known Rosina and justly admired; this is her second complete recording. Her rich mezzo quality and her exceptional ability are very right for the music she sings. But Misciano can hardly be the best available Almaviva. One remembers Valletti. Both Infantino in the old Cetra set (with Simionata) and Monti in the Victor (with de los Angeles) are vocally more attractive and they manage to sing the florid music with more authority. Bastianini is somewhat disappointing as Figaro; he does not have quite the requisite bravado. But it is hardly necessary to praise Corena's Bartolo and Siepi's Basilio.

—P.L.M.

ROUSSEAU: *Le Devin du Village*; Janine Micheau (Colette); Nicolai Gedda (Colin); Michel Roux (The Soothsayer); Orchestre de Chambre Louis de Froment. Angel 35421/L, \$3.48 or \$4.98.

▲**HISTORICALLY**, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's little pastoral is important, and this first recording is a real event. Aside from a couple of old 78 rpm discs—the delightful air sung by Reynaldo Hahn (of which only one stanza is given in this "complete" recording) and a set of four numbers done for L'Anthologie Sonore by Marthe Angelici—the music of the celebrated philosopher has been known mostly in the history books. Its own interest is enhanced by the fact that this was the model and source of the libretto used by the youthful Mozart for his "*Bastien und Bastienne*". No one would call Rousseau a great composer, nor is his little work a real masterpiece, though his music has a simple charm. In preparing the booklet of background notes for the recording, the sponsors have added still another point of interest by printing the English translation of the great eighteenth-century historian Dr. Burney. As for the performance, it leaves very little to be desired. Micheau is in her best form; she never sounds so well as in such lyrical music as this. The tone is lovely, the execution neat. Gedda seems to grow with each successive recording. His light and graceful tenor has more body than we usually find in voices of this type. I cannot say that he sings French music just like a Frenchman, but in his own manner his diction and phrasing are both good. His duets with Micheau are delightful. Roux does not have the most beautiful tone in the world, but this is just as well for the character he portrays. The performance is well paced and controlled by Froment, and every effort seems to have been made to keep it in the proper frame and style. —P.L.M.

▲**SAMMARTINI:** *Symphony in A for Strings; Sonata in G for Two Horns and Strings; Symphony in A for Two Horns and Strings; Sinfonia No. 2 dell' Accademia in C; Symphony in G for Trumpets and Strings*; Orchestra Academia Dell' Orso conducted by Newell Jenkins. Period SPL-731, \$4.98.

▲**KNOWING** the reverence and high reputation in which Sammartini was held (Gluck beat a path to his doorstep for four years as a student, as did Leopold Mozart seeking an audition for his little son), it is surprising that so little of his prodigious output—2,000 works, including two operas, twenty-four symphonies, and countless sonatas and concerti grossi—has been recorded. To be sure, Sammartini's music (which is closest in texture, content and style to K.P.E. Bach's) has not the inventiveness or the genius of harmonic construction of Handel's or Corelli's, yet much of high merit is to be found in it. Jenkins deserves much praise,

not only for enriching the recorded repertory but also for performances of high spirit and fine color values. The orchestra plays with a silken tone and spotless technique. The engineering is of the finest.

—A.K.

▲**SCHUBERT:** *Symphony No. 8 in B minor* ("Unfinished"); **BRAHMS:** *Variations on a Theme of Haydn, Op. 56-a*; Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Herbert von Karajan. Angel 35299, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

(Schubert)
Szell, Cleveland.....Epic LC-3195
Walter, Philadelphia.....Columbia ML-4880
(Brahms)
Toscanini, N.B.C.....Victor LM-1725
▲**NICELY** controlled renditions, but lacking in the grandeur of architecture that makes Toscanini's Brahms unique. Variations 2 and 6 (horns) do not have the bite and rhythmic definition we have come to expect. The austerity which characterizes Karajan's conducting may not seem out of style in the Brahms but it becomes all too apparent in the Schubert. The music flows nicely, particularly in the second movement, but it totally lacks soul. Its *dolces* and nuances seem simulated. Personally, I still favor the genuine warmth and eloquence of Walter. —A.K.

▲**SCHUMANN:** *Manfred Overture*; **SCHUBERT:** *Overture to "Rosamunde"*; **MAGIC Harp Overture; **MEYERHOLZ:** *Fingal's Cave Overture*; *Calm Seas and Prosperous Voyage*; Berlin Philharmonic and Bamberg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Lehmann. Decca DL-9905, \$3.98.**

(Manfred)
Toscanini, N.B.C.....Victor LM-9022
▲**AS** in the case of the Weber overtures reviewed in this issue, these performances have been transferred and recoupled (and presumably also remastered) from the ten-inch series now discontinued. Except for the Schumann Overture, the orchestra is the glorious Berlin Philharmonic. Lehmann's beat is (or rather was, for he is now deceased) exceptionally clean, and his work is characterized by a fine understanding of each score's inherent rhythmic and dramatic values. Although *Calm Seas* is not one of Mendelssohn's masterworks, Lehmann makes it sound convincing. I find his reading of *Fingal's Cave* a bit tame. Well balanced sound. —A.K.

▲**SHOSTAKOVICH:** *Symphony No. 10 in E minor Op. 93*; Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Efrem Kurtz. RCA Victor LM-2081, \$3.98.

Mitropoulos, NY Phil.....Columbia ML-4959
▲**HOW** does symphonic maturity manifest itself? About the only criterion we can go by is that the devices used to create musical emotions become increasingly less obvious to the composer and, therefore, to the listener. This great Tenth

Symphony is the work of the composer's prime—a tempered and refined "higher" overtone of the splashy, youthful Nos. 1 and 5. Mitropoulos and the N. Y. Philharmonic introduced it in December of 1954 and, as might be expected, their recording accents the dramatic. Kurtz treats it as a classic, with infinite polish. To each his own. The recording is among the best. —J.B.L.

▲**J. STRAUSS:** "*The Blue Danube*" —*Ballet Suite*; **BIZET:** "*Jeux d'Enfants*" *Ballet Suite*; London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Antal Dorati. RCA Camden CAL-365, \$1.98.

(Strauss)
Martinon.....London LL-1383
(Bizet)
Fournet.....Epic LC-3288
▲**ABSOLUTELY** charming music. These Camden performances date from the late thirties, and of course their quality of sound does not match that of the newer recordings. Nevertheless, the transfer to LP has been skillfully accomplished, the sound is not nearly as dated as on other records of this period, and the performances themselves are about as fine as one could wish. Dorati handles this music with tremendous verve; I have always preferred the original setting of *Jeux d'Enfants* for piano duet but his interpretation of the orchestral version (by the composer and Alexander Kopyloff) is most appealing. *Le Beau Danube* is Roger Désormière's arrangement of some familiar, some less well known Strauss snippets (including the famous title piece), and this performance, too, is delightful. New recordings of both scores are higher in fidelity—but also in price. —I.K.

▲**J. STRAUSS:** "*Eine Nacht in Venedig*" —*Highlights*; Ruthilde Boesch, Dorothy Siebert, Elisabeth Fahl, Valerie Zorner, Rudolf Christ, Waldemar Kmentt, Kurt Preger, Roman Hanel, Vienna Chamber Choir and Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by Rudolf Moralt. Epic LC-3324, \$3.98.

▲**THE** annotator, George Jellinek, has a good time spoofing the libretto Strauss chose to set. To be sure, its merits are small, either as theater or poetry, though it provided the occasion from some very Straussian tunes. For all that, "*One Night in Venice*" has a way of turning up in revivals; nobody seems to care whether or not it makes any sort of sense. This recording brings us the most important parts of the score; there is surely enough of it to satisfy most listeners. For this reason the release may be preferred to either of the complete, two-disc recordings. It is well given by conductor and all others. But the Angel version boasts a practically perfect Viennese cast, featuring Schwarzkopf, Gedda, Kunz and the rest. The present singers are not quite in that class, though they are very good on their own merits. —P.L.M.

R. STRAUSS: *Till Eulenspiegel*, Op. 28; "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" Suite; L'orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française conducted by Igor Markevitch. Angel 35447, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

(Till)

Reiner, Vienna Victor LM-2077

▲FROM the scurrying little Overture through to the charming Dinner sequence, Markevitch's deft way with this merry suite (played here in its entirety) adds up to sheer delight. Particularly well defined are the vignettes of the Fencing Master, which boasts some brilliant pianism despite the brisk tempo, and the Entrance and Dance of the Tailors. The Minuet which follows the Overture evokes real belly laughs. The accompanying *Till Eulenspiegel* is in a class with the best. I like better only the performance by Fritz Reiner (with the Vienna Philharmonic), whose subtlety would be difficult to match. The orchestra, which is honed to razor-sharp precision, plays with superb spirit and brilliant tone. The sound is Angel's best. —A.K.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Piano Concerto No. 2 in G, Op. 44*; Shura Cherkassky (piano) with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Richard Kraus. Decca DL-9916, \$3.98.

Wührer, Pro Musica Sym. Vox PL-9200

▲THE disturbing lack of balance between piano and ensemble pervades what is otherwise a performance of striking definition. No flicking of the dials could bring the distant sounding piano any closer, nor could it make the orchestra recede into its rightful place as accompanist. Save for this one reservation, Cherkassky's broad approach must take



first honors among the recorded performances of this neglected work. The flexibility and high spirit he brings to it, as well as the perfect sense of pedaling and dramatic timing, make for exciting listening. His future releases will be awaited with keen interest in these quarters. Indeed, this one was by our Editor, who treasures some shellacs made by the same artist as a prodigy three decades ago. —A.K.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *The Sorceress*; Natalie Sokolova (Natasia); Mikhail Kisselev (Prince Nikita Danilich Kuriliatov); Veronika Borissenko (Princess Evpraskia Romanovna); Georgi Nelepp (Prince Yuri); Alexei Korolev (Mamyrov); Anna Matushina (Nenila); Mikhail Skazin (Ivan Zhuran); Pavel Pontriagin (Paisi); Varvara Gradova (Polya); Pavel Korobkov (Kudma); Alexander Tikhonov (Foka); Serafim Sladkopevtsev (Balakin); Levon Khachaturov (Potap); Alexi Usmanov (Lukash); Genaldi Troitzky (Kichiga); State Radio Chorus (Claudia Ptiza and Maria Bondar, chorus masters) and Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Samuel Samosud. Westminster set OPW-1402, four discs, \$19.95.

▲THIS work (some books have it "The Enchantress") was first produced in 1887, taking its place in the list of Tchaikovsky operas between "Mazeppa" and "Pique Dame". It is clearly the product of an accomplished composer, though there is little in it to compare with its immediate successor. One wonders, listening to it and following as best a non-Russian can the strange and ungainly libretto, just how so intelligent a musician as Tchaikovsky could have become interested in such a story. The answer is furnished by the composer's brother Modest, who has confessed to having pointed out the possibilities of a single scene in a drama by Shpazhinsky. Peter was so fully in agreement that he based a whole opera on the play. There are a few arias in the work that turn up from time to time, and there is an admirable orchestral prelude. Says Gerald Abraham: "The Sorceress" is particularly disappointing in that it begins so well. The first act, where there is practically no drama but only lively tableaux, is delightfully colorful. . . . But on the whole the opera is not easy to take seriously. As for this performance, it seems to me a good one, certainly one of the best recorded to have come to us out of Moscow. The singers are all able, though not altogether even. I feel that they give the work its due; it is not likely we will soon hear it otherwise. —P.L.M.

VIVALDI: *Concerti: G minor for violin and orchestra (P. 407); B flat for violin, cello and orchestra (P. 388); C minor for cello and orchestra (P. 434); G major for two violins, two celli and orchestra (P. 135)*. Soloists with L'Ensemble Orchestral de L'Oiseau-Lyre conducted by Louis de Froment. London/L'Oiseau-Lyre OL-50124, \$4.98.

▲THIS composer is rarely predictable and never boring; and these concerti, while they do not seem to me to be on a par with the concerti grossi of Op. 8 or many of the solo concerti for wind instruments, contain some very pleasant music as well as several movements that are outstanding. Among the latter are the opening movement of the C minor Cello Concerto

—unusually somber for Vivaldi and marked by a striking downward motif—and the Finale of the G Major, in which the composer proves that he can handle four solo instruments with as much grace as one. The performance of soloists and orchestra is highly competent, though not, to my ear, exciting. The recorded sound is without much body, and rather too shallow to do the music justice. —S.F.

WEBER: *Overtures—Der Freischütz; Oberon; Preziosa; Euryanthe; Jubel*, Op. 59; *Peter Schmolli*; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and Bamberg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Lehmann (*Freischütz, Preziosa*), Eugen Jochum (*Oberon*), and Ferdinand Leitner (*Euryanthe, Jubel, Peter Schmolli*). Decca DL-9906, \$3.98.

(Freischütz, Oberon, Euryanthe)

Toscanini, N.B.C. Victor LM-6026

▲ALL are apparently recouplings from the now discontinued ten-inch series. The sound presumably has been remastered. The quality of the performances range from routine (*Euryanthe*) to hair-raising (*Oberon*). The impeccable Berlin Philharmonic, which plays the *Oberon* and *Freischütz* Overtures, is ever a joy to hear. Happily the exposition of *Freischütz* is well on the positive side. Although attractive, the playing of the Bamberg Symphony cannot compare with their associates on this record. However, the lyric interpretation of the neglected *Preziosa* Overture, with its charming *Zigeuner* march, as well as the seldom-heard remaining two, are all done in good taste. Fine, clear sound. —A.K.

Panorama of "Musique concrète".

Vol. 2: *Tom-Tom IV; Astrology; Antiphony; Vocalises* (Henry); *Study* (Philippot); *Symphony pour un homme seul*; *R I A Bird* (Henry and Schaeffer); recorded in the studios of Radio Télévision Française. London/Ducetret-Thomson DTL-93121, \$3.98.

▲THIS is a follow-up of Vol. I, reviewed in the March issue of this magazine. The results are similar—some mere sonic curiosities as well as some more-or-less successful attempts at emotionalism and drama. In my opinion, this volume does not contain any dramatic attempts as successful as the stunning and hair-raising *Veil of Orpheus* on the earlier disc. The closest thing to it in expressive power is undoubtedly the *Symphonie pour un homme seul*, which utilizes human voices; and although they are tampered with by various electrical means they are easily recognizable as human sounds. However, I fail to hear the dramatic continuity which made the *Veil* so effective. The record ends with a cute little fantasy using as its basis the bird song which is the call sign for the Italian Radio. This is delightful and rather pretty sound—a rarity in creations of this genre. The recording is clear and brilliant. —D.H.M.

"Unlikely Corners"

WHY NOT LOOK below the surface occasionally and find out what it is in the direct appeal of the popular tune which makes the audience go home whistling; to see if there is not some artistic impulse hidden in unlikely corners. . .

—Ralph Vaughan Williams

WHEN confronted with the proposition that "they don't write songs the way they used to", I must concur to some degree. But it is at least equally true that "they don't sing the songs the way they used to". In a word, *cherchez la femme, mais fermez la bouche*.

With the advent of the Cool School of girl singers, to get at once to my favorite sex, we have interesting innovations taking place in the field of popular vocalism. There is no denying the popularity of many of these ladies; and even those who are not particularly popular have a vociferous and faithful following. If you have had the urge, or the reason—just to find out what it's all about—to read the liner notes on any of their LP recitals you may have met some surprises. To wit: "The evolvement of tradition is a prerequisite to developing maturity in art. With accepted procedures to serve as fixed reference points, creative artists can move tangentially without loss of perspective." And then said creative artist comes on singing *You're Driving Me Crazy* and not, say, the Queen of the Night aria, which is the sort of art that might be expected from the verbiage accompanying the record.

There seems to be something called Style—and everybody's got it. It means you sing maybe a quarter tone off pitch (a Schönbergian touch that *ipso facto* puts you in with the intellectuals); your voice is expressionless, like you're not completely right in the head; or you slur a little thinking maybe you sound like Marilyn Monroe walks.

Only you don't.

I find it difficult to hear any "mastery" in bad intonation, mispronunciation, phrasing that throws the total melodic idea off, and a recitation of the lyrics as if they have no meaning.

Of course, many songs are not particularly distinguished as melodies, and the words aren't terribly literate. But now the Cool Crowd is discovering the Gershwins, Arlen, Duke, Rodgers and Hart and doing *their* songs in. The vocalist and/or arranger changes the harmonies; the tunes themselves are distorted or hopped-up to a fare-thee-well.

We hold "Stars" in too great esteem. Sinatra is a great singer, but sometimes he so personalizes a song that it no longer

sounds like anyone's creation but his own. My suggestion is that if he feels he can write better songs than Rodgers, or Porter, he should write them, but leave the originals alone. Or take Lena Horne.



Here is another great artist, but in her recent record, **Lena Horne at the Waldorf Astoria** (Victor LOC-1028) she tends so much to sex up her material that songs of original beauty, such as a too-fast tempoed *Day In, Day Out*, are torn to prurient tatters. And since the recording was made during a performance at said hostelry, you may hear the cretins guffaw in the more suggestive passages. As for me, I should prefer to hear Miss Horne sing pretty again. This frantic stuff is not for me or for her.

Judy Garland, too, is among the great, but sometimes she evidences a lack of taste in the choice of material. Luckily her last two collections, **Alone** (Capitol T-835) and **Judy** (Capitol T-734) have been excellent. The latter one contains one of the finest renditions to be had of the Harold Arlen-E.Y. Harburg song, *Last Night When We Were Young*, among other choice numbers. The set entitled "Alone" contains a more uniformly good collection, including *By Myself* (Schwartz and Dietz), *Little Girl Blue* (Rodgers and Hart), *I Gotta Right to Sing the Blues* (Arlen and Koehler), *Just A Memory* (DeSylva, Brown and Henderson) and seven others, vibrantly and feelingly sung.

Lee Wiley is back, and the heavens be praised. She isn't cool, but she sings with a beat; maybe her intonation is

a mite eccentric, and she is "stylish," but she *does* sing, musically and intelligently. Her most recent record, **West of the Moon** (Victor LPM-1408) is not built around an individual composer as her previous sets were (Arlen, Gershwin, Rodgers and Hart, Youmans), and it's a pity. Miss Wiley does many a fine song, however—Bowman's *East of the Sun*, Weill and Ira Gershwin's *This Is New*, McHugh and Loesser's *Can't Get Out of This Mood*, Johnson and Coslow's *Moonstruck*, and other lesser numbers. The arrangements by Ralph Burns are excellent and tasteful, and the recording is probably the best Miss Wiley has yet been given.

A fresh new voice is that of Pat O'Day, fresh because, considering her tender years, she refrains from the use of the typical mannerisms of the younger singers who hope to make the grade. **When Your Lover Has Gone** (Golden Crest CR-3009) marks the LP debut of Miss O'Day singing a dozen "standards", if you're looking for some of the good old songs beautifully sung. Here are such standbys as *When Your Lover Has Gone*, *I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan*, *Bill, How Are Things in Glocca Morra?*, and a couple of fine Irving Berlin songs, *All Alone* and *All By Myself In The Morning*.

Good singing helps to bring attention to **The Johnny Ever Greens** (ABC-Paramount 147), songs by Johnny Green interpreted by Eddie Robertson, Sue Allen, the Jud Conlon Rhythmairs accompanied by Russell Garcia and his orchestra. All acquit themselves admirably, but it is actually Johnny Green's contribution, as composer, that is the feature of the album, which incidentally has a nice nostalgic 1930ish flavor. Here are songs like *Body and Soul*, *Out of Nowhere*, *I Cover The Waterfront*, *Coquette*, and *You're Mine You*. Also included are some less familiar ones: *Who Do You Think You Are?*, *The Trembling of a Leaf*, *Hello My Lover Goodbye*.

Green is now director of music at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Before Hollywood he was quite active as a band leader, a fine pianist, and composer of distinctive songs. Since Hollywood he has been busy scoring films like *Easter Parade*, *An American in Paris*, and *High Society*, which leaves little time for original composition. Our loss, as this album amply proves. To return to the vocalists, it might be pointed out that Eddie Robertson's baritone invests the songs with good masculine fullness; Sue Allen sings with a lovely tone and clarity; and the Rhythmairs furnish truly relaxed and beautifully textured harmonies. Russell Garcia worked up the no doubt Green-approved arrangements, and he leads the band with obvious relish and good taste.

Good taste is not a bit evident in **Frances Faye Sings Folk Songs** (Bethlehem BCP-6017) but let's not go into that. *Caveat emptor*, that's all. —E.J.

MISCELLANY:

Great Artists At Their Best—LISZT:

Étude in E flat; Harold Bauer (piano); **FAURE-CASALS**: *Après un rêve*; Emanuel Feuermann (cello), Franz Rupp (piano); **COUPERIN**: *Le Carillon de Cythère*; Ignace Jan Paderewski (piano); **SAINT-SAËNS**: *The Swan*; William Primrose (viola), David Stimer (piano); **J. STRAUSS**: *Blue Danube Waltz*; Josef Lhevinne (piano); **BRAHMS**: *Hungarian Dance No. 1 in G minor*; Erica Morini (violin), Artur Balsam (piano); **BERNSTEIN**: From "Seven Anniversaries"—No. 4: *For Paul Bowles*; No. 5: *In Memoriam: Nathalie Koussevitzky*; No. 6: *For Serge Koussevitzky*; No. 7: *For William Schuman*; Leonard Bernstein (piano); **FRANCISQUE (arr. Grandjany)**: *Pavane et Bransles* from "Le Tresor et Orphée"; Marcel Grandjany (harp); **R. STRAUSS**: *Waltzes* from "Der Rosenkavalier"; Pierre Luboshutz and Genia Nemenoff (duo-pianists). RCA Camden CAI-351, \$1.98.

▲THIS collection of encores (except for the Bernstein excerpts, which are recorded in their entirety elsewhere), arrangements, and assorted ditties hardly merits the album title "Great Artists At Their Best", or the sponsor's further evaluation of the contents as "musical treasures". For the most part, the sound ranges from ancient (Grandjany, Luboshutz and Nemenoff, and Morini) to horrible (Bauer, Paderewski, Lhevinne). Performance-wise the disc offers a rather unfeeling run-through of Liszt's E flat Etude, an adaptation of Fauré's immortal *Après un rêve* (better left to vocalists) played hurriedly and with little feeling, an almost inaudible Paderewski solo, *The Swan* transcribed for viola (not really successfully); and an arrangement of the *Blue Danube* that belongs in a cocktail lounge. The reverse side is somewhat of an improvement, although Morini races Brahms through his *First Hungarian Dance* (she wins); and Luboshutz and Nemenoff play a souped-up arrangement (full of liberties and improvisations) of "Rosenkavalier" Waltzes. Only Bernstein and Grandjany give any indication of the "great" artistry claimed. —A.K.

Toccatas For Piano—CIAIA: *Toccata in G minor*; **BACH**: *Toccata in C minor*; **CZERNY**: *Toccata in C, Op. 92*; **ALKAN**: *Toccata in C minor, Op. 75*; **SCHUMANN**: *Toccata in C, Op. 7*; **PROKOFIEV**: *Toccata in D minor, Op. 11*; **DEBUSSY**: *Toccata* from "Pour le Piano"; **RAVEL**: *Toccata* from "Le Tombeau de Couperin"; **JELOBINSKY**: *Toccata* from "Six Short Etudes"; **LEWENTHAL**: *Toccata alla Scarlatti*; **MENOTTI**: *Ricer-*

care and Toccata on a theme from "The Old Maid and the Thief"; Raymond Lewenthal (piano). Westminster XWN-18362, \$3.98.

▲FORMIDABLE pyrotechnics but, as the title would suggest, these eleven compositions are written in the same style. And the fact that nine of them are played *moto perpetuo*, in 2/4 time, makes for stylistic monotony about midway through. Taken individually, the Bach is delivered in a highly improvisational manner, suggesting Jambor. It lacks the crispness of Landowska for my taste. Czerny's *Toccata* is little more than an advanced exercise in piano fingering. With the Schumann, Lewenthal comes into his own, for his execution and delivery are first rate. Side two deals with more contemporary writing in this style, offering in turn a rather slow and over-pounded Prokofiev *Op. 11* (this piano is possessed of the deepest bass tones I've heard in many a moon), a beautifully styled Debussy *toccata* and another almost as effective by Ravel. Lewenthal need not be so modest about his own writing (in his cover notes). His own composition speaks well for his stylistic inventiveness. The Menotti, which ends side two, is an evocative bit of writing that deserves rehearing. As an interpreter, Lewenthal holds command of considerable sensitivity and subtlety. One would welcome him in more diverse literature. The recital is well treated by the engineers. —A.K.

Music of the Great Keyboard Masters:

Paganini-Liszt: *La Campanella*; **Liszt**: *Consolation No. 3*; **Chopin**: *Military Polonaise, Butterfly Étude*; **Debussy**: *La fille aux cheveux de lin, Feux d'artifice*; **Godowsky**: *Alt Wien*; **Schumann**: *The Contrabandist*; **Rachmaninov**: *Barcarolle, Prelude in E flat minor, Op. 23, No. 9*; **Prokofiev**: *Gavotte, Suggestion diabolique*; **Paderewski**: *Minuet in G Major*; Sascha Gorodnitzki (piano). Capitol P-8374, \$3.98.

▲MOST of the repertoire here consists of short, extremely familiar piano pieces which perhaps are best classified as encores. Gorodnitzki's performances are technically excellent, at times spectacularly so (*La Campanella*, one of his specialties, in particular). Yet the frequently requisite romantic quality and nuances are sometimes lacking. The playing skims too much on the surface; *Feux d'artifice*, for example, is brilliantly performed from the technical viewpoint but dry, simply devoid of the proper mood. This is not to say that the recording cannot be enjoyed for, taken strictly from the virtuoso standpoint, Gorodnitzki's playing is on a high level indeed, and what may be missing as to subtleties of interpretation is considerably made up for by superior showmanship. Very good piano sound. —I.K.



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